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C O N F I D E N T I A L SENTION 1 OF 3 SAIGON 4145

LIMDIS

SUBJECT: THE DELTA ELECTION PICTURE

1. DEPT IS AWARE OF PITFALLS OF ELECTION FORECASTING. THERE ARE NO OPINION POLLS HERE, AND OUR ESTIMATES ARE NECESSARILY IMPRESSIONISTIC. WHEN THE VOTE IS IN, WE MAY WETL FIND THAT OUR ESTIMATE SERIOUSLY UNDER OR OVER RATED SOME OF THE IMPONDERABLE FACTORS. THE FOLLOWING SHOULD THEREFORE BE REED AS NO

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MORE THAN AN EDUCATED GUESS BASED ON THE SURVEYS OUR PROVINCIAL REPORTERS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MAKE.

2. WITH 1,694,944 REGISTERED VOTERS, SOME 80 PER CENT (1,360,000) OF WHOM WILL PROBABLY GO TO THE POLLS, THE 16-PROVINCE DELTA VOTE IS THE BIGGEST PRIZE IN THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS. IT IS RATHER UNLIKELY THAT ENY PRESIDENTIAL SLATE WILL POLL A MAJORITY OF THE IV CORPS VOTE, BUT THE THIEU/KY AND HUONG TRUYEN TICKETS TOGETHER CERTAINLY WILL. IT APPEARS LIKELY THAT THE THIEU/KY TICKET WILL

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WIN WITH A PLURALITY OF PERHAPS 40 TO 50 PERCENT, WITH HUONG/TRUYEN RUNNING A STRONG 25-30 PERCENT SECOND. SUU/DAN SLATE WILL PROBABLY RUN A POOR THIRD, DESPITE WHAT MAY BE AN ATTEMPT BY THIEU/KY CAMPAIGN MANAGERS TO TOUT ITS CHANCES AT THE LAST MINUTE IN A POSSIBLE EFFORT TO UNDERCUT THE MAIN OPPONENT, HUONG. SUU/DAN PROBABLY CAN NOT EXPECT MORE THAN 15 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL. THE REMAINDER OF THE VOTE WILL BE DIVIDED AMONG THE MINOR CANDIDATES WITH HA THUC KY'S WELL-RUN ORGANIZATION MAKING HIM A STRONG CONTENDER FOR FOURTH PLACE. NGUYEN HOA HIEP AND TRUONG DINH DZU WILL DO BETTER THAN LY, BINH, CO AND QUAT.

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3. THIEU/KY TICKET LIKELY TO NARRY ALL DELTA PROVINCES WITH POSSIBLE EXCEPTIONS OF GO CONG, FIEN TUONG, VINH LONG, KIEN GIANG, AND DINH TUONG WHICH COULD FALL TO HUONG. STRENGTH OF GVN SLATE DERIVES FROM ASSIDUOUS AND PROBABLY SUCCESSFUL COURTING OF POLITICALLY SIGNIFICANT GROUPS SUCH AS HOA HAO AND CAMBODIANS (SEE BELOW) PLUS WELL-ORGANIZED AND FINANCED CAMPAIGN ORGANIZATIONS. MILITARY TICKET IS ALSO EXPENTED TO BENEFIT FROM LARGE PART THOUGH CERTAINLY NOT ALL OF THE MILITARY AND THE CIVIL SERVICE VOTE.

4. THIEU AND KY HAVE TOUCHED BASE WITH VIRTUALLY EVERY RELIGIOUS OR POLITICAL GROUP IN THE DELTA. THIEU CHOSE TO MAKE HIS ONE CAMPAIGN APPEARANCE TO DATE JOINTLY WITH OTHER CIVILIAN CANDIDATES IN MY THO. THE GENERALS HAVE PERSONALLY VISITED ALMOST EVERY PROVINCE IN IV CORPS DURING THE PAST SIX WEEKS. THEY ARE REPRESENTED IN MOST PROVINCES (VINH LONG IS EXCEPTION) BY A CAMPAIGN ORGANIZATION MUCH LARGER AND BETTER FINANCED THAN THE OTHER CANDIDATES, USUALLY HEADED BY AN OFFICER OF THE LOCAL PROVINCIAL COUNCIL OR BY A NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEPUTY.

5. PRIME MINISTER KY APPEARS STILL TO BE CONSIDERED BY MANY IN

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THE SOUTH AS THE MORE IMPORTANT OF THE TWO GVN CANDIDATES. BOTH SUPPORTERS AND OPPONENTS OF THE JOINT TICKET USUALLY PRAISE (OR EXORICATE) KY RATHER THAN THIEU. KY HAS A SURPRISINGLY POSITIVE IMAGE; THE SHORTCOMINGS OF THE GVN ARE FREQUENTLY LAID TO INTERMEDIARY OFFICIALS AND SELDOM AT HIS DOOR.

6. THE HUONG/TRUYEN SLATE IS POPULAR AND ENJOYS THE SUPPORT OF A DEDICATED AND ENTHUSIASTIC, IF NOT VERY PROFESSIONAL, GROSP OF YOUNGER TEACHERS, CIVIL SERVANTS, AND INTELLECTUALS. HOWEVER, THEY HAVE NO CERTAIN POSER BASE. THEY MUST RELY ON FRAGMENTS (SOMETIMES SUBSTANTIAL) OF SUPPORT FROM VARIOUS SOURCES. HUONG APPEARS TO BE SUPPORTED BY MOST, BUT NOT ALL, SOUTHERN CATHOLICS, BY A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF CIVIL SERVANTS (INCLUDING MANY IN POSITIONS OF INFLUENCE, FOR EXAMPLE BY SIX OR SEVEN PROVINCE DEPUTIES FOR ADMINISTRATION), BY STUDENTS AND TEACHERS, BY MEMBERS OF THE SOUTHERN BUDDHIST STUDIES' ASSOCIATION END BY SOME BUDDHIST UBA PAGODAS.

7. SOME OF THE MOST DEDICATED OF HUONG/TRUYEN SUPPORTERS ARE MAKING EXCUSES ALREADY (MANY ASSOCIATED WITH CARGES OF UNFAIR

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TACTICS BY THE GVN, SEE BELOW). IN THOSE PROVINCES WHERE HUONG WILL FARE BEST IT WILL BE LARGELY BECAUSE OF A COMBINATION OF GOOD ORGANIZATION AND RELATIVELY SYMPATHETIC GVN OFFICIALS. HUONG SUPPORTERS HAVE FAILED TO EXPLOIT ENDORESEMENT OF THEIR CANDIDATE BY GENERAL DUONG VAN (BIG) MINH; THIS IS HARD TO UNDERSTAND.

8. PHAN KHAC SUU, IN ADDITION TO BEING A SOUTHERNER, WOULD APPEAR TO ENJOY TWO OBVIOUS ADVANTAGES IN THE DELTA -- HE IS A CAO DAI, AND WAS ONCE A RESPECTED CHIEF OF STATE. HOWEVER, THESE HAVE NOT NECESSARILY WORKED IN HIS FAVOR. SUU IS A MEMBER OF AN OBSCURE CAO DAI SECT WHICH HAS STRENGTH MAINLY AROUND THE CITY OF CAN THO; THE MORE NUMEROUS TAY NINH AND BEN TRE CAO DAI APPEAR TO FEEL NO OBLIGATION TO SUPPORT HIM, AND IN FACT MANY DO NOT. ALTHOUGH SUU IS ACKNOWLEDGED TO HAVE BEEN AN HONEST AND DEDICATED PUBLIC OFFICIAL, HIS PERFORMANCE AS CHIEF OF STATE LEAVES HIM VULNERABLE TO THE CHARGE OF INDECISIVENESS.

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9. THE KY/DINH ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN SURPRISINGLY ACTIVE AND HA THUC KY HIMSELF HAS BEEN WELL RECEIVED DURING HIS PUBLIC

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APPEARANCES IN THE DELTA. THERE ARE NOT MANY DAI VIETS IN THE SOUTH; HOWEVER, AND OF THE SOUTHERN DAI VIETS MANY OF THEM ARE TAN DAI VIETS WHO SUPPORT TRUONG DINH DZU.

10. DZU AND NGUYEN HOA HIEP ARE BETTER KNOWN THAN BEFORE THE CAMPAIGN BEGAN. IT IS OUR IMPRESSION THAT DZU'S VIGOROUS CAMPAIGN HAS NOT EVOKED A SYMPATHETIC RESPONSE IN THE SOUTH. HOWEVER, WHILE HIEP CAN COUNT ON THE SUPPORT OF THE TINY SOUTHERN FACTION OF THE VNQDD AND LITTLE ELSE.
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R 271200Z AUG 67
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 SAIGON 4145

LIMDIS

11. THE MOST IMPOETANT SINGLE "BLOCK" VOTE IN IV CORPS IS THAT OF THE HOA HAO, PROBABLY SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 400,000-500,000 IN ALL. GENERAL KY HAS PAID MUCH ATTENTION TO HE HOA HAO, LATEST EFFORT BEING TRIP TO AN GIANG AND HOA HAO VILLAGE AUGUST 24-25. EVENING OF AUGUST 24 KY MET WITH HOA HAO LEADERS INCLUDING CHAIRMAN OF TEMPORARY SECRETARIAT TRAN VAN TUOI. NEXT DAY PRIME MINISTER WENT TO HOA HAO VILLAGE WHERE CONFERENCE OF HOA HAO VILLAGE, DISTRICT

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AND PROVINCIAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS WAS IN PROGRESS. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, KY DID NOT ASK FOR HOA HAO VOTE AND ACKNOWLEDGED FAVORITE HOA HAO THEME "OURS IS A RELIGION AND NOT A POLITICAL PARTY." HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE THERE IS AT LEAST A TACIT UNDERSTANDING THAT THE HOA HAO ORGANIZATIONS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL WILL SUPPORT THE GVN SLATE. ABUNDANT EVIDENCE OF THIS IS PROVIDED BY THE ROLE OF LEADING LOCAL HOA HAO IN THE THIEU/KY CAMPAIGN ORGANIZATIONS IN CHAU DOC, KIEN PHONG

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N AN GIANG, SA DEC,
VINH LONG, PHONGHZINH, AND CHUONG THIEN. SOME HOA HAO MEMBERS
OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY, ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE
RECEIVED NO INSTRUCTIONS FROM PARTY LEADER PHAM BA JCAM, APPEAR
TO SUPPORT SUU. THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE HESITATION AMONG THE
HOA HAO LEADERSHIP FOLLOWING THE AMALGAMATION OF THE KY AND
THIEU TICKETS, PARTLY BECAUSE OF APPREHENSION OVER THE CO-
HESIVENESS OF THE JOINT SLATE AND PARTLY BECAUSE THEY MANY
HAVE FELT THAT IN CONCRETE TERMS THE NEW JOINT GVN CAMPAIGN
ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN ASKING FOR MORE SUPPORT THAN IT HAS
BEEN PREPARED TO PROVIDE. (FOR EXAMPLE, WE HAVE HEARD
THAT HOA HAO ELEMENTS OF "ALL VIET-NAM BLOC" SUSPECT THAT
CAO DAI MEMBERS HAVE BEEN GIVEN FUNDS TO WHICH HOA HAO

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HAVE NO ACCESS. ALSO RUMORS HAVE BEEN HEARD THAT HOA HAO
HAVE PRESSED GVN FOR CREATION OF TWO PROVINCES OUT OF KIEN
GIANG, IN ONE OF WHICH HOA HAO INFLUENCE WOULD PREDOMINATE.
THIS HAS OF COURSE NOT YET BEEN DONE.) ALL THIS HAS BEEN COM-
PLICATED BY THE CONTINUING JOCKEYING FOR POSITION AMONG THE HOA
HAO LEADERSHIP ITSLEF. HOWEVER, WE ARE INCLINED TO BELIEVE THE
THIEU/KY SLATE WILL BENEFIT FROM AS MANY AS 300,000 TO
350,000 HOA HAO VOTES.

12. THERE MAY BE AS MANY AS 400-500,000 CAMBODIANS IN
THE DELTA BUT THEIR VOTE IS NOT LIKELY TO EXCEED 150,000 AND
MAY BE CONSIDERABLY LESS. THIS IS LARGELY BECAUSE CAMBODIANS
TEND TO BE APATHETIC AND VILLAGE ORGANIZATIONS NOT VERY EFFEC-
TIVE, PLUS FACT MANY LIVE IN RELATIVELY INSECURE AREAS. A SOLID
MAJORITY OF THESE, PERHAPS 70 PER CENT, ARE EXPECTED TO VOTE
THE GVN SLATE. THIS IS BECAUSE THEIR BASICALLY CONSERVATIVE,
ANTI-COMMUNIST RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP ADVISES THEM TO DO SO.
THE LEADERSHIP ALSO NO DOUBT UNDERSTANDS THAT AS AN ETHNIC AND
RELIGIOUS MINORITY, THEIR WELFARE IS DEPENDENT ON GOOD RELATIONS
WITH THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT, WHICH THEY EXPECT WILL CONTINUE TO

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BE CONTROLLED BY THIEU AND KY. REMAINDER OF CAMBODIAN VOTE WILL BE SPLIT BETWEEN HUONG, SUU, AND HA THUC KY THE CAMBODIAN VOTE WILL BE INFLUENTIAL IF NOT DECISIVE IN VINH BINH, BA XUYEN, AND BAC LIEU.

13. THE CATHOLIC VOTE IS SMALL (ABOUT 50,000) AND SPLIT BETWEEN HUONG AND THIEU, WITH HUONG PROBABLY ENJOYING THE EDGE. NORTHERN CATHOLICS, STRONGEST IN THE LONG XUYEN DIOCESE ESPECIALLY IN KIEN GIANG AND AN GIANG, WILL SUPPORT THIEU. THE SOUTHERNERS WILL BY AND LARGE VOTE FOR HUONG.

14. DESPITE GRANDIOSE CLAIMS TO THE CONTRARY, THRE ARE NOT MANY CAO DAI IN THE DELTA. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO KNOW HOW MANY, BUT IN ANY EVENT THEY ARE BADLY FRAGMENTED AND LOOSELY ORGANIZED. ONLY IN KIEN HOA DO THEY CONSTITUE A SIGNIFICANT GROUP. SUU HAS THE SUPPORT OF HIS SMALL SECT, THE TIEN THIEN, LOCATED LARGELY IN PHONG DINH. SOME CAO DAI WILL VOTE FOR THIEU/KY SLATE, SOME FOR HSONG, BUT WE ARE UNABLE TO PREDICT IN WHAT PROPORTIONS OR HOW MANY.

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15. THERE IS NO ORGANIZED BUDDHIST VOTE IN IV CORPS. THE RELATIVELY SMALL BUT INFLUENTIAL SOUTHERN BUDDHIST STUDIES ASSOCIATION, HEADED BY MAI THO TRUYEN, IS EXPECTED TO SUPPORT HIS SLATE. THE NATION-WIDE SPLIT IN THE UBA IS ALSO EVIDENT IN THE DELTA. THE TAM CHAU PAGODAS NO DOUBT PREFER THE GVN SLATE, THE TRI QUANG BONZES EITHER HUONG OR SUU. UBA MILITARY CHAPLAINS ARE BELIEVED TO SUPPORT THE GVN SLATE. MASS OF UNORGANIZED BUDDHISTS AND ANCESTOR WORSHIPERS WILL VOTE ACCORDING TO THEIR ESTIMATE OF THEIR OWN BEST INTEREST AT THE TIME, WHICH WILL PROBABLY MEAN A LARGE DEGREE OF SUPPORT FOR THE THIEU/KY SLATE.

16. MILITARY VOTE: RECENT IV CORPS FIGURES SHOW TOTAL 133,800 ARVN, RF AND PF N IV CORPS. THERE ARE ALSO ADDITIONAL NUMBER OF CIDG, COMBAT YOUTH END HAMLET SELF DEFENSE FORCES. WE EXPECT MAJORITY OF MILITARY WILL VOTE FOR THIEU/KY TICKET. HOWEVER SUBSTANTIAL DISSATISFIED ELEMENTS OF MILITARY AND INDEPENDENT OFFICERS MAY VOTE FOR CIVILIAN CAN-

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DIDATES. MUCH OF MILITARY VOTE WILL COME FROM HOA HAO OR OTHER GROUPS THAT WOULD VOTE FOR THIEU AND KY ANYWAY. THEREFORE,

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PROBABLY ONLY ABOUT ONE-THIRD TO ONE-HALF OF ABOVE FIGURE CAN BE CREDITED AS ADDITIONAL TO OTHER VOTES ACCORDED THIEU/KY TICKET ABOVE.

17. CHARGES OF GVN ELECTION MANIPULATION HAVE BEEN HEARD REGARDING SEVERAL PROVINCES IN THE DELTA. ALTHOUGH THERE MAY BE SUBSTANCE TO SOME OF THESE CHARGES, WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO SUBSTANTIATE ANY OF THEM. WE WILL DONTINUE TO LOOK FOR HARD EVIDENCE AND WE RECOGNIZE FACT SUCH EVIDENCE IS MORE LIKETY TO BECOME AVAILABLE DURING COMING WEEK THAN TO DATE. THERE IS NATUARALLY MUCH GENSINE CONCERN, ASED ON EXPERINECE UNDER DIEM, AMONG SUPPORTERS OF THE OPPOSITION CANDIDATES. HOWEVER, IN ALL BUT ONE INSTANCE (GO CONG) THEY HAVE FAILED TO BE VERY SPENIFIC ABOUT THE R CHARGES WHICH IN EFFECT BOIL DOWN MORE TO WHAT THEY FEAR MAY HAPPEN ON ELECTION DAY THAN WHAT HAS HAPPPENED SO FAR. IN FACT, LOCAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN COMMITTEES KNOWN TO BE FUNCTIONING WITHOUT GVN HARRASSMENT AND IN MANY CASES WITH EFFECTIVE SUPPORT FROM PROVINCE OFFICIALS.
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LIMDIS

18. IN THE CASE OF GO CONG, ALLEGATIONS ARE MORE SPECIFIC AND DETAILED AND, PRESSED WITH MORE URGENCY, THAN THOSE WE HAVE HEARD ELSEWHERE. (SEPTEL FOLLOWS.) EVEN IN THIS INSTANCE, HOWEVER, WE NOTE THAT LSMTHOUHO MUE#THE CHARGES HAVE SOMETHING TO GAIN, THEY HOPE, BY TELLING US, AND THAT MOST OF THIS STILL HEARSAY. THIS IS NOT TO SAY WE DO NOT EXPECT SOME ZONAL OFFICIALS TO USE THEIP POSITIONS UNFAIRLY IN FAVOR OF THE THIEU/KY SLATE.

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WE WOULD BE SURPRISED IF THIS WERE NOT THE CASE, AND WE WILL NOT BE ASTONISHED IF THE GO CONG SITUATION TURNS OUT TO BE ONE OF THESE. BUT THERE IS CERTAINLY NO EVIDENCE THAT THE ELECTIONS THROUGHOUT THE DELTA WILL BE SUBJECT TO WIDESPREAD AND SYSTEMATIC MANIPULATION ON BEHALF OF THE THIEU/KY TICKET. INDEED, THERE IS LITTLE REASON WHY THIS SHOULD BE IN VIEW OF THE SUBSTENTIAL VOTE WE FORESEE IN THE AREA FOR THEIU AND KY.
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